

# Example of experiments in fiction argumentative essay

[Business](#), [Company](#)



Joseph Conrad's novella, *The Heart of Darkness*, which centers on the life and times of Marlow, expresses some ideas conveyed in one of D. H. Lawrence's essays: *Why the Novel Matters*. D. H. Lawrence expresses some perturbing views on humanity and life in his essay *Why the Novel Matters*, and it is the same views that Conrad brings out in his novella. In the essay, *Why the Novel Matters*, Lawrence comes out against the hypocrisy expressed by scientists, philosophers and even religious people, who focus on some elements of life, without appreciating every bit of it. Despite the fact that Joseph Conrad and D. H. Lawrence use different artistic features in their writing, an analysis of Joseph Conrad's novella, *The Heart of Darkness*, reveals that the writer follows D. H. Lawrence's essay, *Why the Novel Matters*, to condemn hypocrisy in the present-day society.

D. H. Lawrence does not believe in the idea of elevating the status of some people above others while, at the same time, looking down upon other people as inferior. The writer does not hide his distaste for this state-of-affairs as he writes, "Is there really any huge difference between my hand and my brain?" According to him, all what matters is "me alive." The writer holds that imagination creates these positional differences as he writes, "Why should I imagine that there is me which is more me than my hand is?" Selective information conveyed by scientists, philosophers and various religions has made the psychological differences to stick in the minds of many people. These state-of-affairs serves to further the interests of the people who spread them, without valuing other people's concerns.

For instance, "The philosopher.. decides nothing matters but thoughts matter." The same thing applies to the scientist who "has no use for me as

long as am man alive.” This is the hypocrisy which Lawrence decries, because it involves the selective application of knowledge and selective view of life. The overall picture is lost at the moment and nothing matters, other than strengthening these selective opinions. Joseph Conrad mirrors D. H. Lawrence’s ideas in his novella, as he explores the use of hypocrisy to justify imperialism. Marlow, a sailor brought from Europe to Congo, the main character whom the novella discusses, encounters scenes of torture and cruelty on his way to the inner station (Greenbelt et al. 875). The activities carried out by the company which Marlow works for are a far cry from the trade activities they purport to carry out.

Ironically the company calls their treatment of the native Africans “ a benevolent project to civilize them.” Kurtz, the leader of the Company, openly admits that he uses intimidation and violence to rule. Kurtz further states that he does not trade in ivory; instead, he takes the ivory by force. The native Africans regard Kurtz as a god, and he is revered across the region. Kurtz has organized several missions to raid the nearby regions in search for ivory. The several heads accumulated on the fence posts around the station are a testimony of the methods Kurtz uses to collect ivory (Greenbelt et al. 875).. To the Company, and Kurtz, the African natives are mere objects for facilitating their goal. For example, Kurtz refers to his African mistress as “ the best piece of statuary.” Although this is quite demeaning for the lady, it depicts the cold-heartedness with which the expatriates fulfill their mission; they would go to great depths to hide their true nature, and take advantage of the people’s ignorance.

This experience is exactly what D. H. Lawrence talks about in his essay Why

the Novel Matters. Lawrence states that, “ In life, there must be right and wrong, good and bad.” However, “ What is right in one case if wrong in another.” In the Heart of Darkness, the colonizers feel what they are doing is right, while in reality all they are practicing is downright evil. As Marlow pilots the ship, Kurtz hands him a pamphlet containing instructions on how to civilize the savages. Ironically, the message at the end clearly indicates “ Exterminate all the brutes!” The message at the bottom of the pamphlet says a different story, from the one the colonizers purport to undertake. It brings out the imperial hypocrisy perpetuated by the Belgians. They use brutal means to achieve their selfish interests, and do not actually care about the natives as they pretend to. At first, Marlow is puzzled by the way Kurtz manages the company.

However, it does not take long before Marlow adopts Kurtz’s philosophy, and soon, he begins to refer to his helmsman as “ a piece of machinery.” The native Africans become a backdrop against which the whites use to experiment their philosophical and experiential illusions. At the end of the novella, the writer succeeds in portraying the violence and racism meted on the natives as colonial governments justify attempts to civilize the people. It is essential to note that Kurtz does not apply his dirty tricks on the native Africans only; Kurtz sets a trap for his crew members on their voyage, as well.

As the crew members approach a stack of firewood, they find a note indicating that they should approach the stack cautiously (Greenbelt et al. 875). After the firewood is piled on the steamer, the ship is attacked by natives, who use arrows to fire aimlessly at the crew members. The African

helmsman is killed in the attack, and this prompts Marlow to turn on the steam's whistle to scare away the natives. As odd as it may sound, Kurtz is the one who planned the attack in order to make the sailors believe that he was dead. This is a clear indication that Kurtz is a hypocrite, and would not even care about the loss of his men.

Joseph Conrad's novella *The Heart of Darkness* puts into perspective some aspects discussed by D. H. Lawrence, in his essay *Why the Novel Matters*. Conrad succeeds in depicting high-handed hypocrisy, which is now a common feature imperial authorities taking advantage of the people under their rule. Lawrence opposes the idea that some aspects of life are more precious than others, and candidly puts it that these beliefs are perpetuated by people with hidden motives. They selectively apply what they believe in, thereby missing the bigger picture of life. Conrad's novella presents this philosophy in action through Kurtz and fellow company members. Kurtz does not trade in ivory; instead, he takes it by force from the native Africans. The imperialists believe that their mission is necessary in order to civilize the natives, but their mission leans towards engaging in the plunder of their wealth.

## **Works Cited**

Greenblatt, Stephen, et al. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, Volume 2. New York, NY: Norton , 2006. Print.